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One Hundred Eighteenth Congress

U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Foreign Affairs

2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

June 14, 2023

Daniel Kritenbrink
Assistant Secretary
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Assistant Secretary Kritenbrink,

We are deeply concerned by the State Department's, and specifically the Bureau of East Asia and the Pacific's (EAP's), unwillingness to engage with the United States Congress about our high-level engagement with the People's Republic of China. Secretary Blinken himself has said that the U.S.-PRC relationship presents the "biggest geopolitical test of the 21st century." It is imperative that representatives of the American people are included and consulted in this test.

On June 12th, you cancelled your appearance at a June 14th House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Indo-Pacific hearing on the State Department Budget for East Asia and the Pacific. Your office cited travel to Beijing with Secretary Blinken as the reason for the cancellation, yet your office also rejected our request to hear from your Deputy. We are concerned this is yet another example of a broader unwillingness to engage with Congress, and potentially hold back on action against the PRC, to defer to upcoming meetings with Beijing.

On June 12th, Indo-Pacific Subcommittee Chairwoman Young Kim and Ranking Member Ami Bera sent a letter to your office asking for more information about your recent trip to Beijing over June 4th, the anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre. On May 15, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul also sent a request to the State Department demanding documents surrounding a Reuters report that EAP was holding back on certain actions against the PRC due to impending high-level US-PRC meetings.

In fact, the Indo-Pacific Subcommittee's last readout on State Department high-level official engagement with the PRC was on January 31, 2023. This is despite the fact that Rick Waters, Head of the Office of Coordination on China at the State Department, visited Beijing in March

2023 and you were seen in attendance of National Security Advisor's meeting with his PRC counterpart Wang Yi in Vienna in May 2023.

As Members of Congress, we expect to have close, sustained, and regular engagement with the State Department, and especially with EAP about high-level U.S. meetings with PRC officials. The challenges posed by the PRC affect every facet of American life, and it is imperative that representatives of the American people are properly informed of our government's engagement with our strategic competitor.

This close sustained engagement is even more important as we discuss EAP's budget, as Members of Congress are trustees of U.S. taxpayer money. We therefore request that you make yourself available to brief the Subcommittee on the Indo-Pacific on July 18th, and be prepared to answer questions about our engagement with PRC officials in addition to our spending programs.

Sincerely,



YOUNG KIM
Chairwoman



ANN WAGNER
Member of Congress



KEN BUCK
Member of Congress



MARK E. GREEN, M.D.
Member of Congress



ANDY BARR
Member of Congress



AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Warren Davidson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Warren" and last name "Davidson" clearly legible.

WARREN DAVIDSON
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Waltz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Waltz" clearly legible.

MICHAEL WALTZ
Member of Congress